



The President's Daily Brief

8 February 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The South Vietnamese are showing considerable sensitivity to public discussion of US flexibility regarding President Thieu's tenure or the status of his administration. (Page 1)

Infiltrators moving south from North Vietnam this dry season are more numerous and better equipped than last year. (Page 2)

Bangladesh army and police forces are seeking to establish full government control over the Bihari enclave of Mirpur and to disarm its inhabitants. (Page 3)

The number of Jews receiving exit visas for Israel continued at a record level in January but there are signs that Moscow may slow down the exodus. (Page 3)

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY**SOUTH VIETNAM**

The Thieu government is showing considerable sensitivity to public discussion of US flexibility regarding President Thieu's tenure or the status of his administration. Deputy Foreign Minister Phuong told the US Embassy that "everyone in the palace" is very disturbed by Secretary Rogers' mention of the "flexibility" of the peace proposals during his press conference of 3 February. Phuong said that the allies should not demonstrate flexibility in ways that represent important concessions to an enemy that has yet to agree to negotiate. On 5 February, the Saigon press, quoting government sources, extensively criticized the US position. One moderate and respected daily even speculated that the US might topple the present government and set up a provisional government before elections, thus fulfilling Communist demands.

In reacting so strongly, Thieu is no doubt trying to ensure that speculation about his "stepping down" remains within bounds. The government may also be trying to dampen criticism from the right, such as surfaced in the national assembly last Saturday, when opposition deputies charged that the peace plan was unconstitutional and that the US was interfering in South Vietnam's internal affairs.

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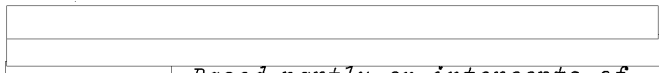
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Based partly on intercepts of planned movements, we believe the rate of infiltration this year will stay ahead of last year's. One reason for the disparity in rates is that the flow of men was interrupted between January and April 1971 while the North Vietnamese were preoccupied with the South Vietnamese incursion into southern Laos. Later, the Communists resumed the movement of men from the North, and by the end of June a total of just under 110,000 had started into the pipeline.

An unusual feature of this year's infiltration is that a large portion of the men moving south are transporting individual and crew-served weapons, including mortars and artillery. According to intercepts, most groups have been 30 to 70 percent equipped, and a number of infantry groups have been 100 percent equipped.

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NOTES

Bangladesh: Bangladesh army and police forces are seeking to establish full government control over the Bihari enclave of Mirpur near Dacca and to disarm its inhabitants. Government operations over the past few days have overcome resistance in most of the enclave [redacted]

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[redacted] The fighting has been heavy, as attested by 760 killed or wounded on the government side. Two areas in the enclave are holding out and are likely to resist the army's pacification efforts. Dacca, however, appears determined to move decisively against the Biharis in order to prevent a recurrence of clashes between Bengalis and Biharis such as those that occurred late last month.

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USSR: The Soviets approved 2,300 exit visas for Jews emigrating to Israel in January, a slight increase over the previous monthly high of 2,200 in December. Nevertheless, Moscow may be considering slowing down the exodus. Over the last few weeks the Soviet media have highlighted the "problems" of Soviet Jews in Israel and have hinted that the number of applicants for emigration is declining. The Soviets are also getting more static from the Arabs. [redacted]

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